

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1 – 4 and 6 – 15 are pending in the application.

Claims 1 and 12 are amended in this Amendment to address the indefiniteness rejections below. No new matter is added.

Claims 1 – 4 and 6 – 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, as indefinite.

The Office Action states that the term “...time between two chargings...” recited in claim 1 appears to relate only to “quasi-continuous” feeding to the first stage, but is indefinite since claim 1 earlier recites that raw sludge is fed “continuously or quasi-continuously” into a first stage.

Accordingly, claim 1 is amended to recite “...wherein if the raw sludge is fed quasi-continuously the time between two chargings of the first stage is not longer than 12 hours...” [emphasis added], to clarify that this particular condition applies “if the raw sludge is fed quasi-continuously,” to obviate the §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph rejection thereto.

Claim 1 is also rejected under §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, as indefinite regarding the terms “first stage” and second stage.” Claim 1 is amended by this Amendment to clarify “first stage” and “second stage” as steps of the process in claim 1.

Likewise, dependent claim 12 is rejected under §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, as indefinite. Claim 12 is amended herein to clarify that “first stage” and “second stage” refer to the same “first stage” and “second stage” recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph rejections for indefiniteness raised in the Office Action for claims 1 and 12 are obviated by the present Amendment.

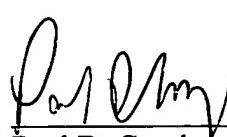
For at least the same reasons as provided above, the §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph rejections to dependent claims 2 – 4 and 6 – 15 are also obviated by the Amendment.

Based on the amendments and discussion above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections brought under §112, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, to claims 1 – 4 and 6 – 15, and issuance of a Notice of Allowability for these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

8/27/09

  
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